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ACTION: AmEmbassy MONTEVIDEO

STATE

SUBJECT: Noon Briefing on Mitrione Kidnapping

1. Q: What about Montevideo? Why don't you tell us everything you know about that situation?

2. A: All right. Embassy this morning advised us that Dan A. Mitrione who is Public Safety Adviser attached to Embassy, was kidnapped on his way to office in Montevideo this morning. We are awaiting further details. According to our present information from Uruguayan authorities, no contact has been made with kidnappers.

3. Q: Does this mean that you disbelieve that one police report, which supposedly came from Montevideo police, to effect this man had been found on side of raod?

4. A: I can't confirm that. I would hope it's true.

5. Q: Did you say Public Safety Adviser? Public Safety Adviser attached to Embassy?

6. A: Right.

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7. Q: But he's not Foreign Service or anything?

8. A: Yes. He's AID. Let me add to this, to clarify confusing reports we've been getting, that there were separate unsuccessful attempts made to kidnap two other U.S. Embassy officers this morning. They are Michael Gordon Jones of San Luis Obispo, California -- who is an Economic Officer -- and Nathan Rosenfeld of Roswell, New Mexico, who is Cultural Affairs Officer.

9. Q: Can you tell us Mitrione's hometown, please?

10. A: We don't have hometown on him, but for very long period he worked for police department -- and I gather was Police Chief -- in Richmond, Indiana.

11. Q: How big a public-safety aid program do we have in Uruguay?

12. A: I don't believe I have that. You mean in terms of people?

13. Q: In terms of people, money -- some indication of what program is:

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14. A: I'll get that information. (Spokesman later advised there four AID officers.)

15. Q: How did these other two gentlemen manage to escape? Do you have any details on that?

16. A: No. It's still very fragmentary. I might note that both these men suffered some bodily harm in attempts. They were struck on head.

17. Q: Well, how serious is that -- are those injuries -- can you say?

18. A: Well, I didn't say "injuries." I said "some bodily harm." We don't know whether there were any injuries. I don't know that.

19. Q: You mean they were bruised as against fractured?

20. A: Possibly.

21. Q: You mean three men were all in different places when these attempts were made?

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22. A: Again, it's fragementary; but it seems that possibly Jones and Rosenfeld were attempting to come to Embassy together. It seems they were travelling together, if they ever got into their cars.

23. Q: Is it sort of recommended procedure now for American diplomats in Latin America to try to travel in groups?

24. A: No. As you know, it depends on place. And I don't know security regulations in detail and recommendations in detail in Uruguay, but each case differs.

25. Q: Does Mitrione have any family?

26. A: Yes. He has nine children -- four of whom were with him and his wife in Montevideo, and five here.

27. Q: How long had he been in Uruguay?

28. A: October '69 he was assigned there.

29. Q: The five children who you say are here ---that's in the United States -- in Washington, in Indiana? Where are they, do you know?

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30. A: We couldn't trace them all down, but he seems to have a son -- Dan, Junior ---who's student here and lives in Silver Spring.

31. Q: You assume that these were all separate incidents? I wasn't quite clear on that. Or you just don't know?

32. A: Well, it is, I confess, a little foggy yet; but, certainly, Mr. Mitrione was travelling alone and the other two possibly were travelling separately but there's some indication they were going to come to Embassy in same car.

33. Q: ~~XXX~~ Did they also report about Brazilian diplomat?

34. A: We have that report from Embassy.

35. Q: Have there been any demands, with or without contact? Uruguayans said they didn't have contact. Have kidnappers published any demands?

36. A: Apparently not.

37. Q: Have you got the ages of these people?

38. A: Yes. Mr. Mitrione was born in 1920 -- August 4, 1920. It would make him 50. And Mr. Jones is 26; Mr. Rosenfeld is 48.

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By the way, I'm a little surprised no one asked; but I will post a chronology of kidnappings and other attempted assaults on American personnel -- in the office.

End.

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